

Chapter 271

SHORELAND-WETLAND ZONING

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| § 271-1. Statutory authorization. | § 271-14. Zoning Administrator. |
| § 271-2. Findings of fact and purpose. | § 271-15. Zoning permits. |
| § 271-3. Compliance. | § 271-16. Fees. |
| § 271-4. Municipalities and state agencies regulated. | § 271-17. Recording. |
| § 271-5. Abrogation and greater restrictions. | § 271-18. Revocation. |
| § 271-6. Interpretation and applicability. | § 271-19. Board of Appeals. |
| § 271-7. Annexed areas. | § 271-20. Powers and duties of Board of Appeals. |
| § 271-8. Shoreland-wetland zoning maps. | § 271-21. Appeals to Board. |
| § 271-9. District boundaries. | § 271-22. Public hearings. |
| § 271-10. Filled wetlands. | § 271-23. Decisions. |
| § 271-11. Permitted uses. | § 271-24. Amendments. |
| § 271-12. Prohibited uses. | § 271-25. Enforcement; violations and penalties. |
| § 271-13. Nonconforming structures and uses. | § 271-26. Definitions and word usage. |

[HISTORY: Adopted by the Village Board of the Village of Albany 11-14-1994 by Ord. No. 04-94. Amendments noted where applicable.]

GENERAL REFERENCES

Zoning Board of Appeals -- See Ch. 16, § 16-2.
Plan Commission -- See Ch. 16, § 16-3.
Building construction -- See Ch. 86.
Erosion control -- See Ch. 122.
Utilities -- See Ch. 249.
Floodplain zoning -- See Ch. 270.
Subdivision of land -- See Ch. 272.
Zoning -- See Ch. 273.

§ 271-1. Statutory authorization.¹

This chapter is adopted pursuant to the authorization in W.S.A. ss. 61.35 and 61.351 for villages and W.S.A. ss. 87.30 and 281.31.

§ 271-2. Findings of fact and purpose.

Uncontrolled use of the shoreland-wetlands and pollution of the navigable waters of the municipality would adversely affect the public health, safety, convenience and general welfare and

¹ Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).

impair the tax base. The Legislature of Wisconsin has delegated responsibility to all municipalities to:

- A. Promote the public health, safety, convenience and general welfare.
- B. Maintain the storm and flood water storage capacity of wetlands.
- C. Prevent and control water pollution by preserving wetlands which filter or store sediments, nutrients, heavy metals or organic compounds that would otherwise drain into navigable waters.
- D. Protect fish, their spawning grounds, other aquatic life and wildlife by preserving wetlands and other aquatic habitat.
- E. Prohibit certain uses detrimental to the shoreland-wetland area.
- F. Preserve shore cover and natural beauty by restricting the removal of natural shoreland cover and controlling shoreland-wetland excavation, filling and other earthmoving activities.

§ 271-3. Compliance.

The use of wetlands and the alteration of wetlands within the shoreland area of the municipality shall be in full compliance with the terms of this chapter and other applicable local, state or federal regulations. (However, see § 271-13 of this chapter for the standards applicable to nonconforming uses.) All permitted development shall require the issuance of a zoning permit unless otherwise expressly excluded by a provision of this chapter.

§ 271-4. Municipalities and state agencies regulated.

Unless specifically exempted by law, all cities, villages, towns and counties are required to comply with this chapter and obtain all necessary permits. State agencies are required to comply if W.S.A. s. 13.48(13) applies. The construction, reconstruction, maintenance and repair of state highways and bridges by the Wisconsin Department of Transportation are exempt when W.S.A. s. 30.12(4)(a) applies.

§ 271-5. Abrogation and greater restrictions.

A. This chapter supersedes all the provisions of any municipal zoning ordinance enacted under W.S.A. s. 61.35 or 87.30, which relate to floodplains and shoreland-wetlands, except that where another municipal zoning ordinance is more restrictive than this chapter, that ordinance shall continue in full force and effect to the extent of the greater restrictions, but not otherwise.

B. This chapter is not intended to repeal, abrogate or impair any existing deed restrictions, covenants or easements. However, where this chapter imposes greater restrictions, the provisions of this chapter shall prevail.

§ 271-6. Interpretation and applicability.

In their interpretation and application, the provisions of this chapter shall be held to be minimum requirements and shall be liberally construed in favor of the municipality and shall not be deemed a limitation or repeal of any other powers granted by the Wisconsin Statutes. Where a provision of this chapter is required by a standard in Chapter NR 117, Wis. Adm. Code, and where the ordinance provision is unclear, the provision shall be interpreted in light of the Chapter NR 117 standards in effect on the date of the adoption of this chapter or in effect on the date of the most recent text amendment to this chapter.

§ 271-7. Annexed areas.

The Green County shoreland zoning provisions in effect on the date of annexation remain in effect administered by the municipality for all areas annexed by the municipality after May 7, 1982, unless any of the changes as allowed under 1993 Wis. Act 329 occurs. These annexed lands are described on the municipality's Official Zoning Map. The Green County shoreland zoning provisions are incorporated by reference for the purpose of administering this section and are on file in the office of the Municipal Zoning Administrator.

§ 271-8. Shoreland-wetland zoning maps.

The following maps are hereby adopted and made part of this chapter and are on file in the office of the Clerk:

- A. Wisconsin Wetland Inventory Maps stamped "FINAL" on July 27, 1994.
- B. Floodplain zoning maps titled "Village of Albany Flood Insurance Study Panel #550158-0001C" and dated revised October 15, 1993.
- C. United States Geological Survey Map, Albany Quadrangle 7.5 Minute Series, as amended in 1971.

§ 271-9. District boundaries.

A. The Shoreland-Wetland Zoning District includes all wetlands in the municipality which are five acres or more and are shown on the final Wetland Inventory Map that has been adopted and made a part of this chapter which are:

(1) Within 1,000 feet of the ordinary high-water mark of navigable lakes, ponds or flowages. Lakes, ponds or flowages in the municipality shall be presumed to be navigable if they are shown on the United States Geological Survey quadrangle maps or other zoning base maps which have been incorporated by reference and made a part of this chapter.

(2) Within 300 feet of the ordinary high-water mark of navigable rivers or streams, or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever distance is greater. Rivers and streams shall be presumed to be navigable if they are designated as either continuous or intermittent waterways on the United States Geological Survey quadrangle maps or other zoning base maps which have been incorporated by reference and made part of this chapter. Floodplain zoning maps adopted in § 271-8B shall be used to determine the extent of floodplain areas.

B. Determinations of navigability and ordinary high-water mark location shall initially be made by the Zoning Administrator. When questions arise, the Zoning Administrator shall contact the appropriate district office of the Department for a final determination of navigability or ordinary high-water mark.

C. When an apparent discrepancy exists between the Shoreland-Wetland District boundary shown on the Official Zoning Maps and actual field conditions at the time the maps were adopted, the Zoning Administrator shall contact the appropriate district office of the Department to determine if the Shoreland-Wetland District boundary, as mapped, is in error. If Department staff concur with the Zoning Administrator that a particular area was incorrectly mapped as a wetland, the Zoning Administrator shall have the authority to immediately grant or deny a zoning permit in accordance with the regulations applicable to the correct zoning district. In order to correct wetland mapping errors or acknowledge exempted wetlands designated in § 271-10, the Zoning Administrator shall be responsible for initiating a map amendment within a reasonable period.

§ 271-10. Filled wetlands.

Wetlands which are filled prior to July 27, 1994, the date on which the municipality received final wetland inventory maps, in a manner which affects their wetland characteristics to the extent that the area can no longer be defined as wetland are not subject to this chapter.

§ 271-11. Permitted uses.

The following uses are permitted subject to the provisions of W.S.A. chs. 30 and 31 and the provisions of other local, state and federal laws, if applicable:

A. Activities and uses which do not require the issuance of a zoning permit, provided that no wetland alteration occurs:

- (1) Hiking, fishing, trapping, hunting, swimming, snowmobiling and boating.
- (2) The harvesting of wild crops, such as marsh hay, ferns, moss, wild rice, berries, tree fruits and tree seeds, in a manner that is not injurious to the natural reproduction of such crops.
- (3) The practice of silviculture, including the planting, thinning and harvesting of timber.
- (4) The pasturing of livestock.
- (5) The cultivation of agricultural crops.
- (6) The construction and maintenance of duck blinds.

B. Uses which do not require the issuance of a zoning permit and which may involve wetland alterations only to the extent specifically provided below:

- (1) The practice of silviculture, including limited temporary water level stabilization measures which are necessary to alleviate abnormally wet or dry conditions that would have an adverse impact on the conduct of silvicultural activities if not corrected.

(2) The maintenance and repair of existing drainage systems to restore preexisting levels of drainage, including the minimum amount of filling necessary to dispose of dredged spoil, provided that the filling is otherwise permissible and that dredged spoil is placed on existing spoil banks where possible.

(3) The construction and maintenance of fences for the pasturing of livestock, including limited excavating and filling necessary for such construction or maintenance.

(4) The construction and maintenance of piers, docks, walkways, observation decks and trail bridges built on pilings, including limited excavating and filling necessary for such construction or maintenance.

(5) The installation and maintenance of sealed tiles for the purpose of draining lands outside the Shoreland-Wetland Zoning District, provided that such installation or maintenance is done in a manner designed to minimize adverse impacts upon the natural functions of the Shoreland-Wetland listed in § 271-24B.

(6) The maintenance, repair, replacement and reconstruction of existing highways and bridges, including limited excavation and filling necessary for such maintenance, repair, replacement or reconstruction.

C. Uses which are allowed upon the issuance of a zoning permit and which may include wetland alterations only to the extent specifically provided below:

(1) The construction and maintenance of roads which are necessary for the continuity of the municipal street system, the provision of essential utility and emergency services or to provide access to uses permitted under this section, provided that:

(a) The road cannot, as a practical matter, be located outside the wetland.

(b) The road is designed and constructed to minimize adverse impacts upon the natural functions of the wetland listed in § 271-24B.

(c) The road is designed and constructed with the minimum cross-sectional area practical to serve the intended use.

(d) Road construction activities are carried out in the immediate area of the roadbed only.

(e) Any wetland alteration must be necessary for the construction or maintenance of the road.

(2) The construction and maintenance of nonresidential buildings, provided that:

(a) The building is used solely in conjunction with a use permitted in the Shoreland-Wetland District or for the raising of waterfowl, minnows or other wetland or aquatic animals.

(b) The building cannot, as a practical matter, be located outside the wetland.

(c) The building does not exceed 500 square feet in floor area.

(d) Only limited filling and excavating necessary to provide structural support for the building is allowed.

(3) The establishment and development of public and private parks and recreation areas, outdoor education areas, historic, natural and scientific areas, game refuges and closed areas, fish and wildlife habitat improvement projects, game bird and animal farms, wildlife preserves and public boat launching ramps, provided that:

(a) Any private development allowed under this subsection shall be used exclusively for the permitted purpose.

(b) Only limited filling and excavating necessary for the development of public boat launching ramps, swimming beaches or the construction of park shelters or similar structures is allowed.

(c) The construction and maintenance of roads necessary for the uses permitted under this subsection are allowed only where such construction and maintenance meets the criteria in Subsection C(1).

(d) Wetland alterations in game refuges and closed areas, fish and wildlife habitat improvement projects, game bird and animal farms and wildlife preserves shall be for the purpose of improving wildlife habitat or to otherwise enhance wetland values.

(4) The construction and maintenance of electric and telephone transmission lines, water and gas distribution lines and sewage collection lines and related facilities and the construction and maintenance of railroad lines, provided that:

(a) The utility transmission and distribution facilities and railroad lines cannot, as a practical matter, be located outside the wetland.

(b) Only limited filling or excavating necessary for such construction or maintenance is allowed.

(c) Such construction or maintenance is done in a manner designed to minimize adverse impacts upon the natural functions of the wetland listed in § 271-24B.

§ 271-12. Prohibited uses.

Any use not listed in § 271-11 is prohibited unless the wetland or a portion of the wetland has been rezoned by amendment of this chapter in accordance with § 271-24.

§ 271-13. Nonconforming structures and uses.

The lawful use of a building, structure or property which existed at the time this chapter or an applicable amendment to this chapter took effect and which is not in conformity with the provisions of this chapter, including the routine maintenance of such a building or structure, may be continued, subject to the following conditions:

A. The shoreland-wetland provisions of this chapter authorized by W.S.A. s. 61.351 shall not limit the repair, reconstruction, renovation, remodeling or expansion of a nonconforming structure or of any environmental control facility related to such a structure in existence on the effective date of the shoreland-wetland provisions. All other modifications to nonconforming structures are subject to W.S.A. s. 62.23(7)(h), which limits total lifetime structural repairs and alterations to 50% of current fair market value.

B. If a nonconforming use or the use of a nonconforming structure is discontinued for 12 consecutive months, any future use of the building, structure or property shall conform to this chapter.

C. Any legal nonconforming use of property which does not involve the use of a structure and which existed at the time of the adoption or subsequent amendment of this chapter adopted under W.S.A. s. 61.351 may be continued although such use does not conform with the provisions of this chapter. However, such nonconforming use may not be extended.

D. The maintenance and repair of nonconforming boathouses which are located below the ordinary high-water mark of any navigable waters shall comply with the requirements of W.S.A. s. 30.121.

E. Uses which are nuisances under common law shall not be permitted to continue as nonconforming uses.

§ 271-14. Zoning Administrator.

A. The Village Clerk-Treasurer is appointed Zoning Administrator for the purpose of administering and enforcing this chapter.

B. The Zoning Administrator shall have the following duties and powers:

(1) Advise applicants as to the provisions of this chapter and assist them in preparing permit applications and appeal forms.

(2) Issue permits and certificates of compliance and inspect properties for compliance with this chapter.

(3) Keep records of all permits issued, inspections made, work approved and other official actions.

(4) Have access to any structure or premises between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. for the purpose of performing these duties.

(5) Submit copies of decisions on variances, appeals for a map or text interpretation and map or text amendments within 10 days after they are granted or denied to the appropriate district office of the Department.

(6) Investigate and report violations of this chapter to the appropriate municipal planning agency and the Municipal Attorney.

(7) The Zoning Administrator is responsible for inspection of projects to ensure compliance with the terms of this chapter and to file a report of his/her findings with the Village Board on each project.

§ 271-15. Zoning permits.

A. When required. Unless another section of this chapter specifically exempts certain types of development from this requirement, a zoning permit shall be obtained from the Zoning Administrator before any new development, as defined in § 271-26A, or any change in the use of an existing building or structure is initiated.

B. Application. An application for a zoning permit shall be made to the Zoning Administrator upon forms furnished by the municipality and shall include, for the purpose of proper enforcement of these regulations, the following information:

(1) General information.

(a) Name, address and telephone number of applicant, property owner and contractor, where applicable.

(b) Legal description of the property and a general description of the proposed use or development.

(c) Whether or not a private water supply or sewage system is to be installed.

(2) Site development plan. The site development plan shall be submitted as a part of the permit application and shall contain the following information, drawn to scale:

(a) Dimensions and area of the lot.

(b) Location of any structures with distances measured from the lot lines and center line of all abutting streets or highways.

(c) Description of any existing or proposed on-site sewage systems or private water supply systems.

(d) Location of the ordinary high-water mark of any abutting navigable waterways.

(e) Boundaries of all wetlands.

(f) Existing and proposed topographic and drainage features and vegetative cover.

(g) Location of floodplain and floodway limits on the property as determined from floodplain zoning maps.

(h) Location of existing or future access roads.

(i) Specifications and dimensions for areas of proposed wetland alteration.

C. Expiration. All permits issued under the authority of this chapter shall expire 12 months from the date of issuance.

§ 271-16. Fees.

The municipal governing body may, by resolution, adopt fees for the following:

- A. Zoning permits.
- B. Public hearings.
- C. Legal notice publications.
- D. Rezoning petitions.

§ 271-17. Recording.

Where a zoning permit is approved, an appropriate record shall be made by the Zoning Administrator of the land use and structures permitted.

§ 271-18. Revocation.

Where the conditions of a zoning permit are violated, the permit shall be revoked by the Board of Appeals.

§ 271-19. Board of Appeals.

The Village President shall appoint a Board of Appeals under W.S.A. s. 62.23(7)(e), consisting of five members subject to confirmation by the municipal governing body. The Board of Appeals shall adopt rules for the conduct of its business as required by W.S.A. s. 63.23(7)(e)3.

§ 271-20. Powers and duties of Board of Appeals.

The Board of Appeals:

- A. Shall hear and decide appeals where it is alleged there is error in any order, requirement, decision or determination made by an administrative official in the enforcement or administration of this chapter.
- B. May authorize upon appeal a variance from the dimensional standards of this chapter where an applicant convincingly demonstrates:
 - (1) That literal enforcement of the terms of this chapter will result in unnecessary hardship for the applicant.
 - (2) That the hardship is due to special conditions unique to the property and is not self-created or based solely on economic gain or loss.
 - (3) That such variance is not contrary to the public interest as expressed by the purpose of this chapter.

(4) That such variance will not grant or increase any use of property which is prohibited in the zoning district.

§ 271-21. Appeals to Board.

Appeals to the Board of Appeals may be taken by any person aggrieved or by an officer, department, board or bureau of the community affected by any order, requirement, decision or determination of the Zoning Administrator or other administrative official. Such appeals shall be taken within a reasonable time, as provided by the rules of the Board, by filing with the official whose decision is in question and with the Board of Appeals a notice of appeal specifying the reasons for the appeal. The Zoning Administrator or other official whose decision is in question shall transmit to the Board all the papers constituting the record on the matter appealed.

§ 271-22. Public hearings.

A. Before making a decision on an appeal or application, the Board of Appeals shall, within a reasonable period of time, hold a public hearing. The Board shall give public notice of the hearing by publishing a Class 2 notice under W.S.A. ch. 985, specifying the date, time and place of the hearing and the matters to come before the Board. At the public hearing, any party may present testimony in person, by agent or by attorney.

B. A copy of such notice shall be mailed to the parties in interest and the appropriate district office of the Department at least 10 days prior to all public hearings on issues involving shoreland-wetland zoning.

§ 271-23. Decisions.

A. The final disposition of an appeal before the Board of Appeals shall be in the form of a written decision, made within a reasonable time after the public hearing and signed by the Board Chairperson. Such decision shall state the specific facts which are the basis of the Board's determination and shall either affirm, reverse or modify the order, requirement, decision or determination appealed, in whole or in part, dismiss the appeal for lack of jurisdiction or prosecution or grant the application for a special exception permit.

B. A copy of such decision shall be mailed to the parties in interest and the appropriate district office of the Department within 10 days after the decision is issued.

§ 271-24. Amendments.

A. The municipal governing body may alter, supplement or change the district boundaries and the regulations contained in this chapter in accordance with the requirements of W.S.A. s. 62.23(7)(d)2, NR 117, Wis. Adm. Code and the following:

(1) A copy of each proposed text or map amendment shall be submitted to the appropriate district office of the Department within five days of the submission of the proposed amendment to the municipal planning agency.

(2) All proposed text and map amendments to the shoreland-wetland zoning regulations shall be referred to the municipal planning agency, and a public hearing shall be held as a Class 2 notice as required by W.S.A. s. 62.23(7)(d)2. The appropriate district office of the Department shall be provided with written notice of the public hearing at least 10 days prior to such hearing.

B.² In order to ensure that this chapter will remain consistent with the shoreland protection objectives of W.S.A. s. 281.31, the municipal governing body may not rezone a wetland in a Shoreland-Wetland Zoning District, or any portion thereof, where the proposed rezoning may result in a significant adverse impact upon any of the following wetland functions:

- (1) Storm and flood water storage capacity;
- (2) Maintenance of dry season stream flow or the discharge of groundwater to a wetland, the recharge of groundwater from a wetland to another area or the flow of groundwater through a wetland;
- (3) Filtering or storage of sediments, nutrients, heavy metals or organic compounds that would otherwise drain into navigable waters;
- (4) Shoreline protection against erosion;
- (5) Fish spawning, breeding, nursery or feeding grounds;
- (6) Wildlife habitat; or
- (7) Areas of special recreational, scenic or scientific interest, including scarce wetland types and habitat of endangered species.

C. Where the district office of the Department determines that a proposed rezoning may have a significant adverse impact upon any of the criteria listed in § 271-24B, the Department shall so notify the municipality of its determination either prior to or during the public hearing held on the proposed amendment.

D. The appropriate district office of the Department shall be provided with:

- (1) A copy of the recommendation and report, if any, of the municipal planning agency on a proposed text or map amendment within 10 days after the submission of those recommendations to the municipal governing body.
- (2) Written notice of the action on the proposed text or map amendment within 10 days after the action is taken.

E. If the Department notifies the municipal planning agency, in writing, that a proposed amendment may have a significant adverse impact upon any of the criteria listed in § 271-24B, that proposed amendment, if approved by the municipal governing body, shall not become effective until more than 30 days have elapsed since written notice of the municipal approval was mailed to the Department, as required by § 271-24D. If within the thirty-day period the Department notifies the municipality that the Department intends to adopt a superseding shoreland-wetland zoning ordinance for the municipality as provided by W.S.A. ss. 62.231(6) and 61.351(6), the proposed amendment shall not become effective until the ordinance adoption procedure under W.S.A. s. 62.231(6) or 61.351(6) is completed or otherwise terminated.

²Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).

§ 271-25. Enforcement; violations and penalties.³

Any development, building or structure or accessory building or structure constructed, altered, added to, modified, rebuilt or replaced or any use or accessory use established after the effective date of this chapter in violation of the provisions of this chapter by any person, firm, association or corporation (including building contractors or their agents) shall be deemed a violation. The Zoning Administrator shall refer violations to the municipal planning agency and the Municipal Attorney, who shall prosecute such violations. Any person, firm, association, or corporation who violates or refuses to comply with any of the provisions of this chapter shall be subject to a forfeiture of not less than \$50 nor more than \$300 per offense, together with the taxable costs of such action. Each day of continued violation shall constitute a separate offense. Every violation of this chapter is a public nuisance, and the creation thereof may be enjoined and the maintenance thereof may be abated by action at suit of the municipality, the state or any citizen thereof pursuant to W.S.A. s. 87.30(2).

§ 271-26. Definitions and word usage.

A. Definitions. The following terms used in this chapter shall have the meanings indicated:

ACCESSORY STRUCTURE OR USE -- A detached subordinate structure or a use which is clearly incidental to, and customarily found in connection with, the principle structure or use to which it is related and which is located on the same lot as that of the principle structure or use.

BOATHOUSE -- As defined in W.S.A. s. 30.01(1d), a structure used for the storage of watercraft and associated materials which has one or more walls or sides.⁴

CLASS 2 PUBLIC NOTICE -- Publication of a public hearing notice under W.S.A. ch. 985 in a newspaper of circulation in the affected area. Publication is required on two consecutive weeks, the last at least seven days prior to the hearing.

DEPARTMENT -- The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

DEVELOPMENT -- Any man-made change to improved or unimproved real estate, including but not limited to the construction of buildings, structures or accessory structures; the construction of additions or substantial alterations to buildings, structures or accessory structures; the placement of buildings or structures; ditching, lagooning, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation or drilling operations; and the deposition or extraction of earthen materials.

DRAINAGE SYSTEM -- One or more artificial ditches, tile drains or similar devices which collect surface runoff or groundwater and convey it to a point of discharge.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL FACILITY -- Any facility, temporary or permanent, which is reasonably expected to abate, reduce or aid in the prevention, measurement, control or monitoring of noise, air or water pollutants, solid waste and thermal pollution, radiation or other pollutants, including facilities installed principally to supplement or to replace existing

³ Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).

⁴ Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).

property or equipment not meeting or allegedly not meeting acceptable pollution control standards or which are to be supplemented or replaced by other pollution control facilities.

FIXED HOUSEBOAT -- As defined in W.S.A. s. 30.01(1r), means a structure not actually used for navigation which extends beyond the ordinary high-water mark of a navigable waterway and is retained in place either by cables to the shoreline or by anchors or spudpoles attached to the bed of the waterway.⁵

NAVIGABLE WATERS:

(1)⁶ Lake Superior, Lake Michigan, all natural inland lakes within Wisconsin and all streams, ponds, sloughs, flowages and other waters within the territorial limits of this state, including the Wisconsin portion of boundary waters, which are navigable under the laws of this state. Under W.S.A. s. 281.31(2)(d), notwithstanding any other provision of law or administrative rule promulgated thereunder, shoreland ordinances required under W.S.A. s. 61.351 or 62.231 and Chapter NR 117, Wis. Adm. Code, do not apply to lands adjacent to farm drainage ditches if:

- (a) Such lands are not adjacent to a natural navigable stream or river;
- (b) Those parts of such drainage ditches adjacent to such lands were not navigable streams before ditching; and
- (c) Such lands are maintained in nonstructural agricultural use.

(2) Wisconsin Supreme Court has declared navigable bodies of water that have a bed differentiated from adjacent uplands and levels or flow sufficient to support navigation by a recreational craft of the shallowest draft on an annually recurring basis [Muench v. Public Service Commission, 261 Wis. 492 (1952) and DeGaynor and Co., Inc., Department of Natural Resources, 70 Wis. 2d (1975)]. For example, a stream which is navigable by skiff or canoe during normal spring high-water is navigable, in fact, under the laws of this state, though it may be dry during other seasons.

ORDINARY HIGH-WATER MARK -- The point on the bank or shore up to which the presence and action of surface water is so continuous as to leave a distinctive mark, such as by erosion, destruction or prevention of terrestrial vegetation, predominance of aquatic vegetation or other easily recognized characteristic.

PLANNING AGENCY -- The municipal plan commission created under W.S.A. s. 62-23(1), a board of public land commissioners or a committee of the municipality's governing body which acts on matters pertaining to planning and zoning.

SHORELANDS -- Lands within the following distances from the ordinary high-water mark of navigable waters: 1,000 feet from a lake, pond or flowage; and 300 feet from a river or stream or to the landward side of the floodplain, whichever distance is greater.

SHORELAND-WETLAND DISTRICT -- The zoning district, created in this chapter, comprised of shorelands that are designated as wetlands on the wetlands inventory maps which have been adopted and made a part of this chapter.

⁵ Editor's Note: Amended at time of adoption of Code (see Ch. 1, General Provisions, Art. I).

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UNNECESSARY HARDSHIP -- That circumstance where special conditions, which were not self-created, affect a particular property and make strict conformity with restrictions governing area, setbacks, frontage height or density unnecessarily burdensome or unreasonable in light of the purposes of this chapter.

VARIANCE -- An authorization granted by the Board of Appeals to construct or alter a building or structure in a manner that deviates from the dimensional standards of this chapter.

WETLAND ALTERATION -- Any filling, flooding, draining, dredging, ditching, tiling, excavating, temporary water level stabilization measures or dike and dam construction in a wetland area.

WETLANDS -- Those areas where water is at, near or above the land surface long enough to support aquatic or hydrophytic vegetation and which have soils indicative of wet conditions.

B. Word usage. For the purpose of administering and enforcing this chapter, the terms or words used herein shall be interpreted as follows: Words used in the present tense include the future; words in the singular number include the plural number; and words in the plural number include the singular number. The word "shall" is mandatory, not permissive. All distances, unless otherwise specified, shall be measured horizontally.